UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/1997/L.58
24 July 1997

Original: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1997
Geneva, 30 June - 25 July 1997
Agenda item 12

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/227

Draft decision submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury (Bangladesh), as a result of informal consultations

Review of subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, in which the Assembly, inter alia, decided that the Council should undertake a review of the mandates, composition, functions and working methods of its functional commissions and expert bodies and should, as a matter of priority, consider the role, working methods and relationship with other bodies of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Committee for Development Planning, the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources,

Recalling its resolution 1996/41 of 26 July 1996 on the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227,

Taking into account the work done during its substantive session of 1997, including preparatory consultations in New York and views and positions expressed by Member States as well as inputs provided by the Economic and Social Council secretariat and the substantive secretariats servicing the bodies under priority consideration,

1. Decides to continue, at its resumed substantive session of 1997, consideration of its review in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I, paragraphs 70 and 71, and Council resolution 1996/41;

2. Takes note of the summary of the review exercise as undertaken at its substantive session of 1997, submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, which is contained in the annex to the present resolution;

3. Requests the President of the Council to transmit the summary also to the Presidents of the General Assembly at its fifty-first and fifty-second sessions, for consideration under relevant items of the agenda of the Assembly.

Annex

SUMMARY BY THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, AMBASSADOR ANWARUL KARIM CHOWDHURY (BANGLADESH), OF THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/227: REVIEW OF THE COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT, THE COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, THE COMMITTEE ON NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY AND ON ENERGY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

In the preparations for the substantive session of 1997 of the Economic and Social Council in New York and during the session itself in Geneva, several rounds of consultations were held, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 50/227, relating to a review of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Committee for Development Planning, the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources as part of the Council's review of its subsidiary bodies. These consultations were assisted by the valuable background information and ideas/suggestions provided at the request of the Member States by the chairpersons of the bodies under priority review, the secretariat of the Council and other relevant substantive secretariats. The Group of 77 and China and the European Union also submitted written comments and proposals for consideration in the review exercise. On the basis of these various inputs, an informal outline for discussion (dated 30 June 1997) was presented by the Vice-President as mandated. During the substantive session, a comprehensive review of the mandates, composition and working methods of each of the four bodies under review was carried out.

The present summary, prepared by the Vice-President, of the issues addressed is intended to facilitate further consultations.

On process, the broad perception during the consultations was that:

- The intergovernmental process mandated by General Assembly resolution 50/227 should continue at the resumed substantive session of 1997; it was also argued, however, that the Council's review would benefit from further information, to be provided by the Secretary-General;
- There was a need to coordinate the intergovernmental process of the review to ensure there was no duplication.

On the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the main areas of concern were as follows:

- The role of the Commission, its profile and its impact;
- Intergovernmental oversight, its relationship with the Council and the Trade and Development Board as well as other intergovernmental bodies, including the Commission on Sustainable Development;
- Coordination, inter alia, through its agenda and work programme;
- The relationship between the Commission and its substantive secretariat, and with organizations of the United Nations system;
- The size, composition and completion of membership (vacancies, regional balance and the like).

On the Committee for Development Planning, the main areas of concern were as follows:

- The role of the Committee in preparing for development discussions in the Council, particularly during its high-level segment, as well as its role in the identification and analysis of new and emerging trends and issues in the area of development;
- The name of the Committee: it could be changed to Committee for Development Policies, as suggested by the Committee itself, or to Committee for Development Issues;
- The role of the Committee in reviewing the list of the least developed countries: whether this function could be carried out by some other United Nations body;
- Clarification of the relationship between the Committee and the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development.

On the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development, the main areas of concern were as follows:

- How to effectively deal, at an expert level, with the energy issue, which is of particular importance for the developing countries;
- The place of the Committee in the subsidiary machinery of the Council: should it report to the Council directly or through the Commission on Sustainable Development;

- Arrangements for dissemination and use of the reports of the Committee;
- Linkages with other United Nations bodies.

On the Committee on Natural Resources, the main areas of concern were as follows:

- The place of the Committee in the machinery of the Council and its relationship with other bodies, particularly the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development;
- Whether issues of freshwater require separate consideration in the Committee or can be discussed in the Commission on Sustainable Development;
- How to address effectively the issue of minerals and whether it is fea ible to combine this function with the work on energy in the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development;
- Arrangements for dissemination and use of the reports of the Committee.

Appendix

Informal outline for discussion on the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Committee for Development Planning, the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources

A. Commission on Science and Technology for Development

- Retain the mandate established by the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Council. In this context, focus particular attention on the issues of transfer of technology and capacity-building.
- Reduce the size of the Commission from 53 members to 24 members, who will be experts nominated by Member States.
- Continue to report directly to the Council.
- Improve coordination with other bodies, including the Commission on Sustainable Development.
- Improve the dissemination of information.

B. Committee for Development Planning

- The name of the Committee is to be changed to Committee for Development Policies/Issues.
- The Committee should perform as an independent advisory body to the Council, providing inputs with regard to various issues/themes being discussed in the Council. Its mandate on the least developed countries is to continue.
- Dissemination of information is to be improved.
- The Council should provide guidance regarding the programme of work of the Committee.
- The composition of the Committee (24 members) should include people from a variety of economic and social disciplines of relevance to its think-tank role. Membership should include those who are able to provide newer perspectives on issues under consideration.

C. Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development

D. Committee on Natural Resources

- These two Committees are to be merged to form one Committee on Natural Resources and Energy for Development.
- The new Committee will have two panels, one dealing with energy for development including new and renewable sources of energy, and the other dealing mainly with the water resources.
- The Committee should act as an advisory expert body reporting to the Council.
- The new Committee will be composed of 24 experts nominated by Member States: 12 members with adequate and appropriate expertise will serve on each panel.
- The panels should focus on appropriate recommendations for action by the Council.
- The Committee will meet annually for one week in view of the importance of the issues considered by the two panels.
- Dissemination of information and coordination with other United Nations bodies will be improved.